

A Communication Plan for the 2012 Ball State University Dance Marathon

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Kate Burnett

**Thesis Advisor
Becky McDonald**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Becky McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana**

May 2012

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2012

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Abstract

Public relations plays a vital role in the promotion of any event or organization. As the Director of Public Relations for the 2012 Dance Marathon, it was my job to promote the organization, its mission, and all of the special events leading up to the marathon on February 18, 2012. The communication strategy for the year was to make the Ball State community aware of the dance marathon and the special events held prior to it. Awareness was created through the selection of target audiences and by creating messages tailored to those audiences. I communicated to the target publics by using social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as through other means of promotion. I created the communication strategy and all of the material for this public relations campaign. The result was the most successful marathon to date raising \$87,628.04 and having more than 700 dancers at the event.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Becky McDonald for advising me through this project. Her help and guidance during my four-year college career enabled me to create this plan, which resulted in a successful marathon.

I would also like to thank all of the 2012 Dance Marathon executive board members for their constant support and friendship. Without their encouragement, this project and the marathon itself would not have been possible.

A Communication Plan for the 2012 Ball State University Dance Marathon

By: Kate Burnett

Public relations is a multifaceted field. Professionals deal with everything from media relations to internal communications to social media. As the director of public relations for the 2012 Ball State University Dance Marathon, my job was to create a successful communication plan and actively engage the Ball State University community in a campus-wide philanthropic event.

I built my project around the use of social media and its influence on the actions of college-aged individuals. My objective, as the director of public relations, was to create social media outlets and other promotional materials to get the attention of Ball State students and to get them to register as participants for the marathon.

My project reinforces all of the major concepts I have learned within my major during my four years at Ball State. I put into practice the theories of strategic communication and design, my knowledge of social media outlets, and the theories behind executing a successful public relations campaign. This project pushed me beyond what I have learned in the classroom and forced me to make practical application of those skills. I had to apply everything I learned through my classes to successfully complete this project.

Background

To begin the strategic communication process for the 2012 marathon, it was important to examine the history of both the event and the organization. Ball State University Dance Marathon (BSUDM) is one of more than 150 colleges and high schools

nationwide raising money for the Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospital in their local community. The CMN hospital closest to Ball State is Riley Hospital for Children, located in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Ball State marathon originally started as a philanthropic event hosted by Phi Mu Fraternity and Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity and was held for five consecutive years. In 2007, BSUDM had their first campus-wide marathon as an official student organization and celebrated its fifth year in 2012.

Ball State University Dance Marathon is run entirely by students who devote their time to ensure the success of the organization. The executive board members and their respective committee members, made up of Ball State students, work year round to fundraise, hold events for Riley families, and plan for the marathon. Their work culminates in a 12-hour standing marathon every February and all of the money raised is donated to Riley Hospital for Children.

Before beginning my communication plan for the 2012 marathon, I also chose to look at the work done by the previous director of public relations for BSUDM. My predecessor's work was mainly centered on word of mouth and the use of flyers to create awareness for the marathon. My predecessor also visited various student organizations on campus in an effort to reach out to the Ball State community. A Twitter handle was created for BSUDM, but it was not utilized, nor was there a Facebook page in existence. The 2011 marathon used a Facebook group to try and generate social media awareness of the event.

Target Audience

Every communication campaign is focused on reaching out to specific target audiences. The messages are then strategically tailored for their audiences in whatever communication style is necessary to meet the audience's needs.

The target audience for this communication plan is the student population of Ball State University, the Ball State and Muncie communities, and the Riley families that our executive board interacts with on a regular basis.

The students at Ball State compose the members of the BSUDM executive board, committee members, and the potential dance marathon participants. They are an important target audience because they have been the main source of fundraising for our previous marathons and because the BSUDM exec wants them to take an active part in the event. Students are also the target audience because they are the main group that Dance Marathon hopes to impact through awareness of the work that is done at Riley Hospital for Children.

The Ball State and Muncie communities are important target audiences because Dance Marathon wants to expand the awareness of the event beyond the student population. Generating awareness in the Ball State and Muncie communities is important because the 2012 executive board hopes to create relationships with potential corporate and private donors.

Finally, it is important for our Riley families to feel connected with the work Dance Marathon does throughout the year. A lot of the families that work with BSUDM utilize social media and like to feel involved with the events that are taking place on campus. The

families are essential to our campaign goal of awareness because they share their Riley stories with the students at Ball State and throughout the state of Indiana.

Key Messages and Goals

The key messages that were used throughout the campaign focused on awareness of the 2012 Dance Marathon and the mission behind the event. The mission of Ball State University Dance Marathon is to create awareness and raise money for Riley kids and their families. The main communication strategy of this plan is to help make the Ball State community aware of Dance Marathon and the special events held prior to it by sending out targeted messages that help the audience connect to the cause on a more personal level. The messages are also designed to be fun and energetic to better relate to the college audience and to serve as representation of the spirit of dance marathon.

Members of Dance Marathon constantly represent the work of Riley Hospital for Children, so it was important to keep in mind the cause behind the organization. Riley strives to provide top-tier medical care for its patients from routine to complex procedures. Dance Marathon also promoted the use of Riley stories to engage the target publics and the reinforce the Riley slogan, "Hope Happens Here."

Goals and Objectives

The 2012 executive board held our first retreat in April 2011 to establish our goals for the marathon overall. Our original goals were to have a total of 600 dancers at the event and to raise \$60,000.

The main goal of my communication plan was to create awareness of dance marathon and the special events held prior to the marathon. I wanted to increase the

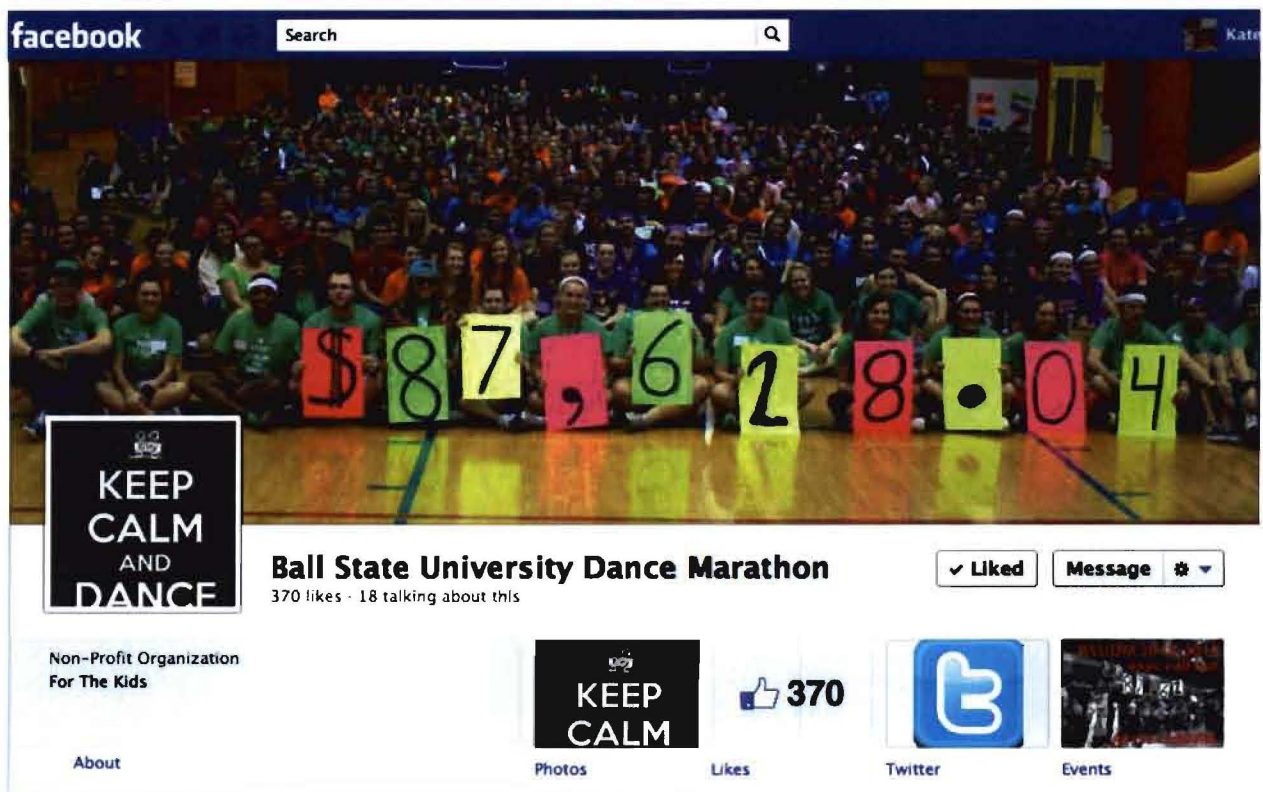
target public's acceptance of the marathon and BSUDM as an organization. Another goal for my role was to help create a relationship between Dance Marathon and the Ball State student population. I set out to accomplish this goal by creating a social media presence for BSUDM and by working to create relationships with local media outlets. I also wanted to utilize guerrilla marketing tactics to promote the marathon and events associated with Dance Marathon as an organization.

Social Media

To help meet the goals of my communication strategy, I decided to create social media outlets for Dance Marathon. The two social media outlets I used to connect with the target publics were Facebook and Twitter. I chose to use social media as my main form of communication because my main target audience was the Ball State student population. Most college students at least one form of social media, so I thought this would be the best way to communicate with a large number of students. I also thought that social media would be a good communication outlet because of its ability to be used in an interactive format.

Facebook

The Facebook page I created for Dance Marathon is called, "Ball State University Dance Marathon." The page was created in April 2011. I created all of the content in the "About" section of the page to accurately describe Dance Marathon as an organization. The "About" section also lists contact information and the official Dance Marathon website.



Description

Ball State University is one of 150 colleges and high schools around the country to host a dance marathon for a Children's Miracle Network hospital. Our marathon originally started as a philanthropic event hosted by Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity and Phi Mu Fraternity, and went on for nine consecutive years.

In 2008, Ball State Dance Marathon became a campus-wide student organization, and has since...

General Information

This upcoming year's Dance Marathon will be held on February 18, 2012.



Bali State University Danc...

About ▾

✓ Liked

About

For The Kids

Company Overview

Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon program began in 1995 when Indiana University raised more than \$60,000 after their third event for the Ryan White Infectious Disease Fund. The tradition of dance marathons began as a contest in which the last couple standing was declared the winner. The concept began to change in 1973 when Penn State's Interfraternity Council began a dance marathon as a fundraiser. In 1995, the first year of the program, four universities raised \$142,000 for kids treated at Children's Miracle Network hospitals. From this point on, the Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon program has grown tremendously.

Dance Marathon is a nationwide movement, involving college and high school students at over 150 schools across the country who raise money for the Children's Miracle Network hospital in their community. These students spend a year learning invaluable leadership and social skills while raising funds in a variety of ways and interacting with children's hospital patients and families. The year culminates with a 12-36 hour long event where the students stay on their feet through dancing, games, and entertainment in order to celebrate the total amount raised that year. Why stay on your feet for that long? To quote the first Children's Miracle Network Dance Marathon's mission statement: "We dance for those who can't." It is this solidarity to and connection with the cause that makes Dance Marathon an event unlike any other.

Basic Info

Founded 2008

Location [Muncie, IN](#)

Awards Bali State University Dance Marathon 2011 raised \$39,220.00 FTK!!!

Products Everyday miracles ♥

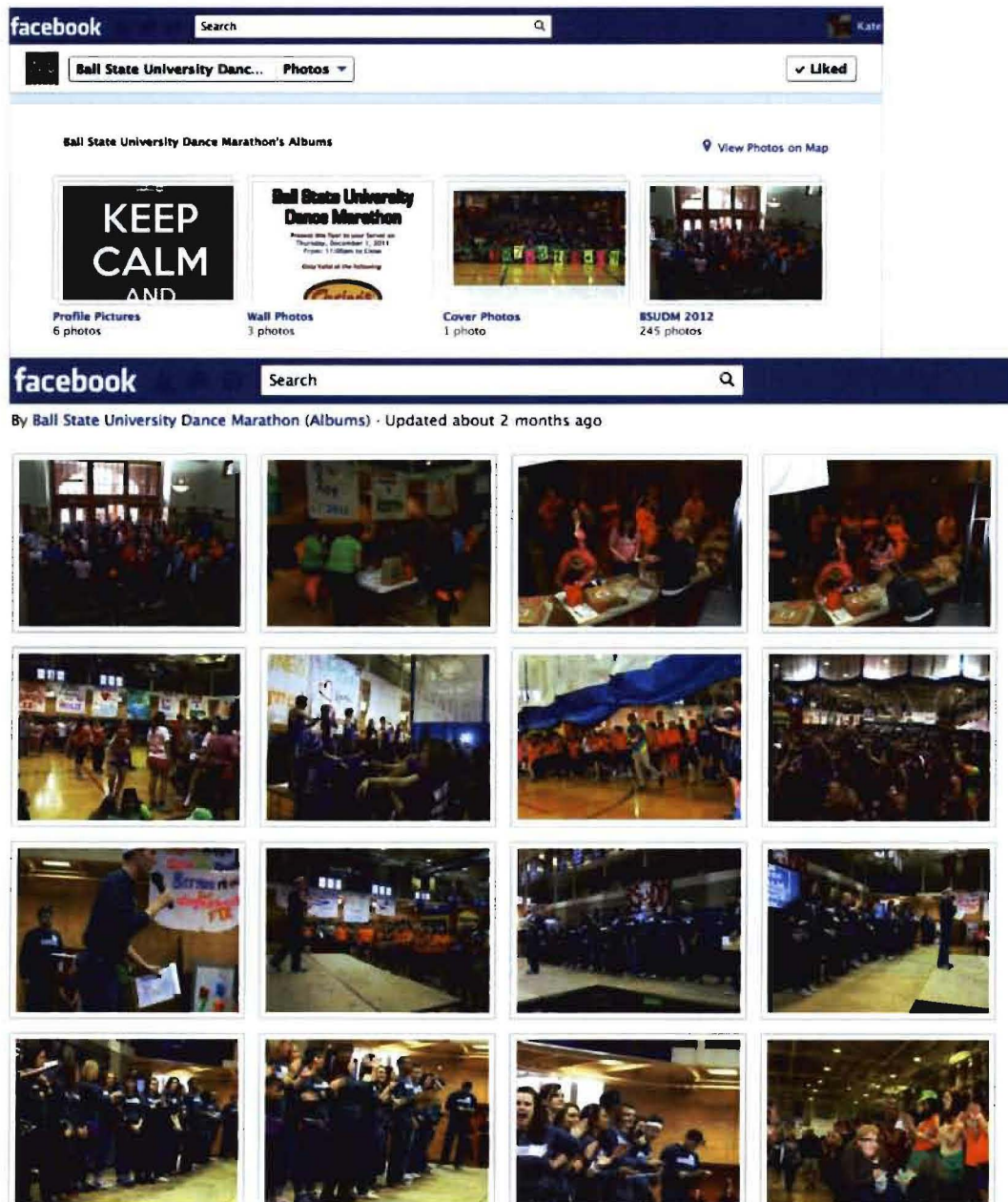
Contact InfoWebsite <http://www.bsudancemarathon.org/>

I also added the ability to link the Twitter feed from the @BSUDM account to the Facebook page. This allows continuity between the Facebook and Twitter accounts and allows fans of the Facebook page to easily monitor both sites.

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the BSU Dance Marathon page. At the top, the Facebook logo is on the left, a search bar in the center, and a user profile picture on the right. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with a profile picture, the page name "Ball State University Danc...", a "Twitter" dropdown menu, and a "Liked" button. The main content area features the page header "BSU Dance Marathon @BSUDM" with a "Follow" button. Below this, a list of posts from the BSUDM account is displayed. Each post includes the BSUDM profile picture, the name "BSUDM", the text of the post, and the time it was posted. The posts are as follows:

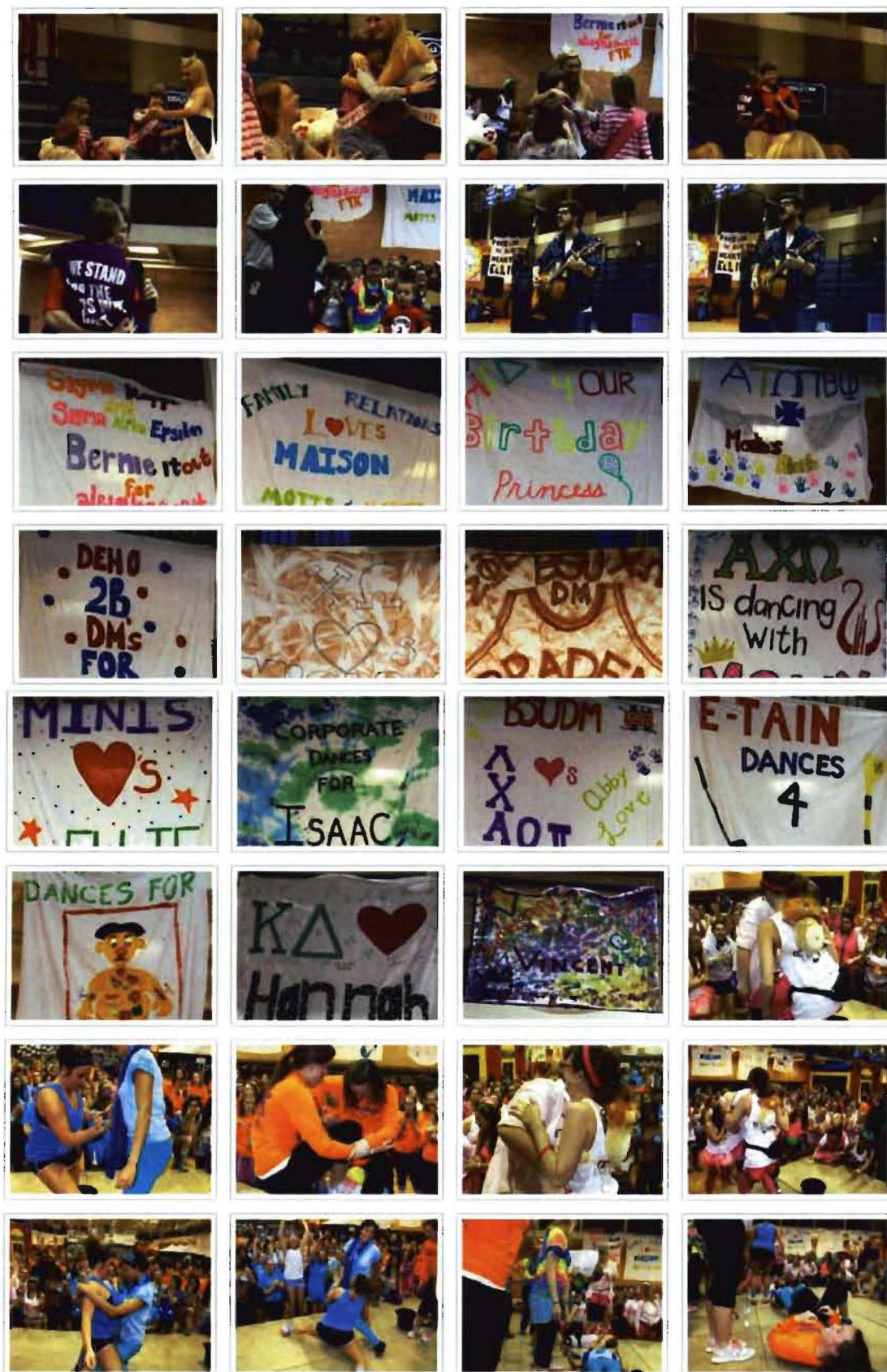
- Post 1:** Proud of our own team for being @DeltaZeta_BSU's #TurtleTug co-ed champs! #support
about 1 day ago · view
- Post 2:** Like our Facebook page! #BSUDM13 #FTK <http://t.co/nbOpjqBs>
about 4 days ago · view
- Post 3:** It's #DMWednesday! If you don't know what #DanceMarathon is all about, check it out: <http://t.co/aIY6zjBT> #FTK!
about 5 days ago · view
- Post 4:** History of Dance Marathon! #GetInspired #FTK <http://t.co/0SiSiBxQ>
about 6 days ago · view
- Post 5:** Good morning, DM-ers and all! What inspires you? #FTK
about 6 days ago · view
- Post 6:** Happy Friday! Thanks to everyone who came to the committee callout meeting last night! Glad to see so many faces! #BSUDM13 #FTK!

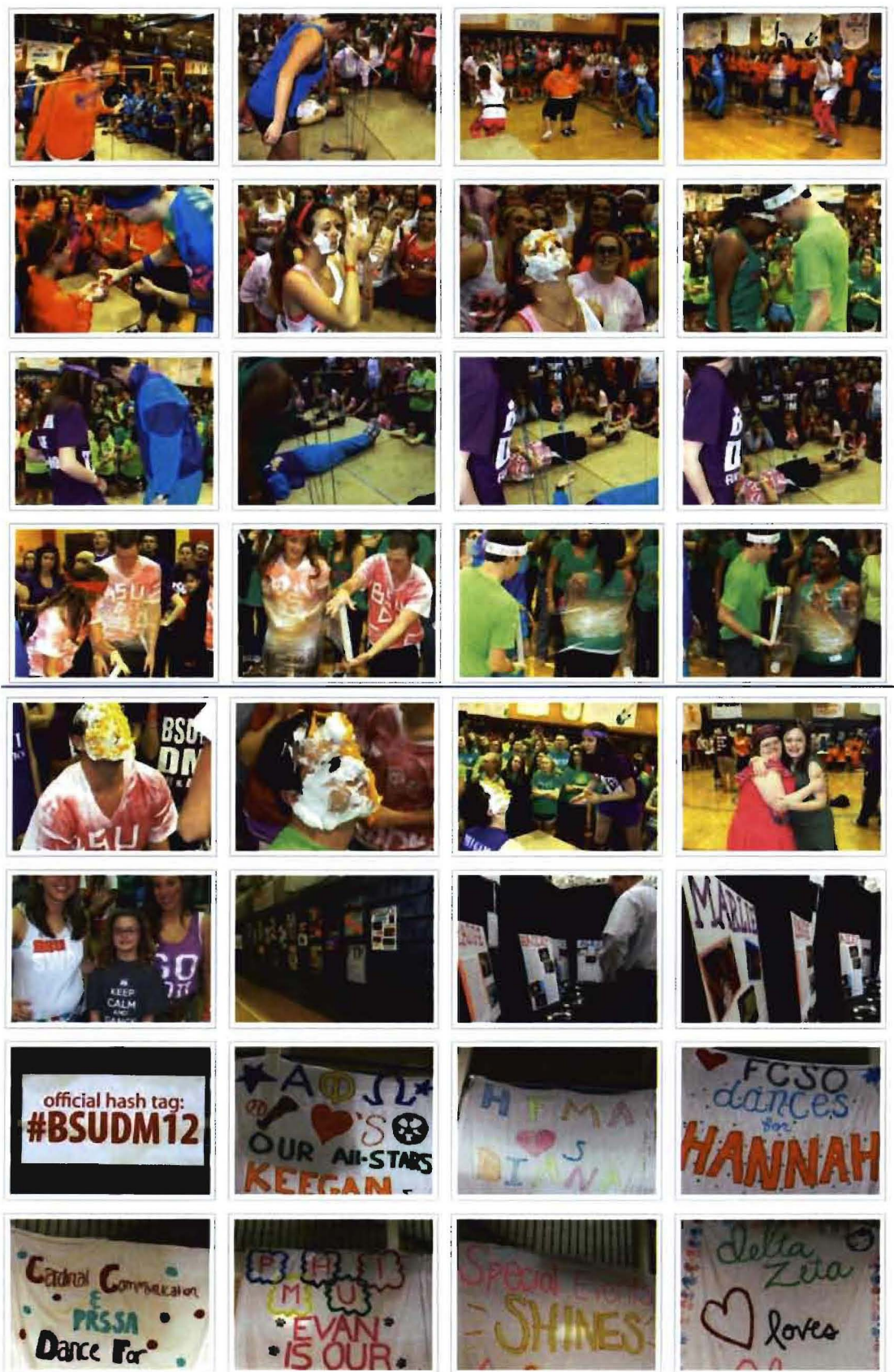
The "Photos" section contains pictures from the 2012 Dance Marathon and the profile pictures for the Facebook page. The photo album from the marathon is a compilation of photographs from different photographers that took pictures at the marathon. The album provides a pretty complete documentation from the event.

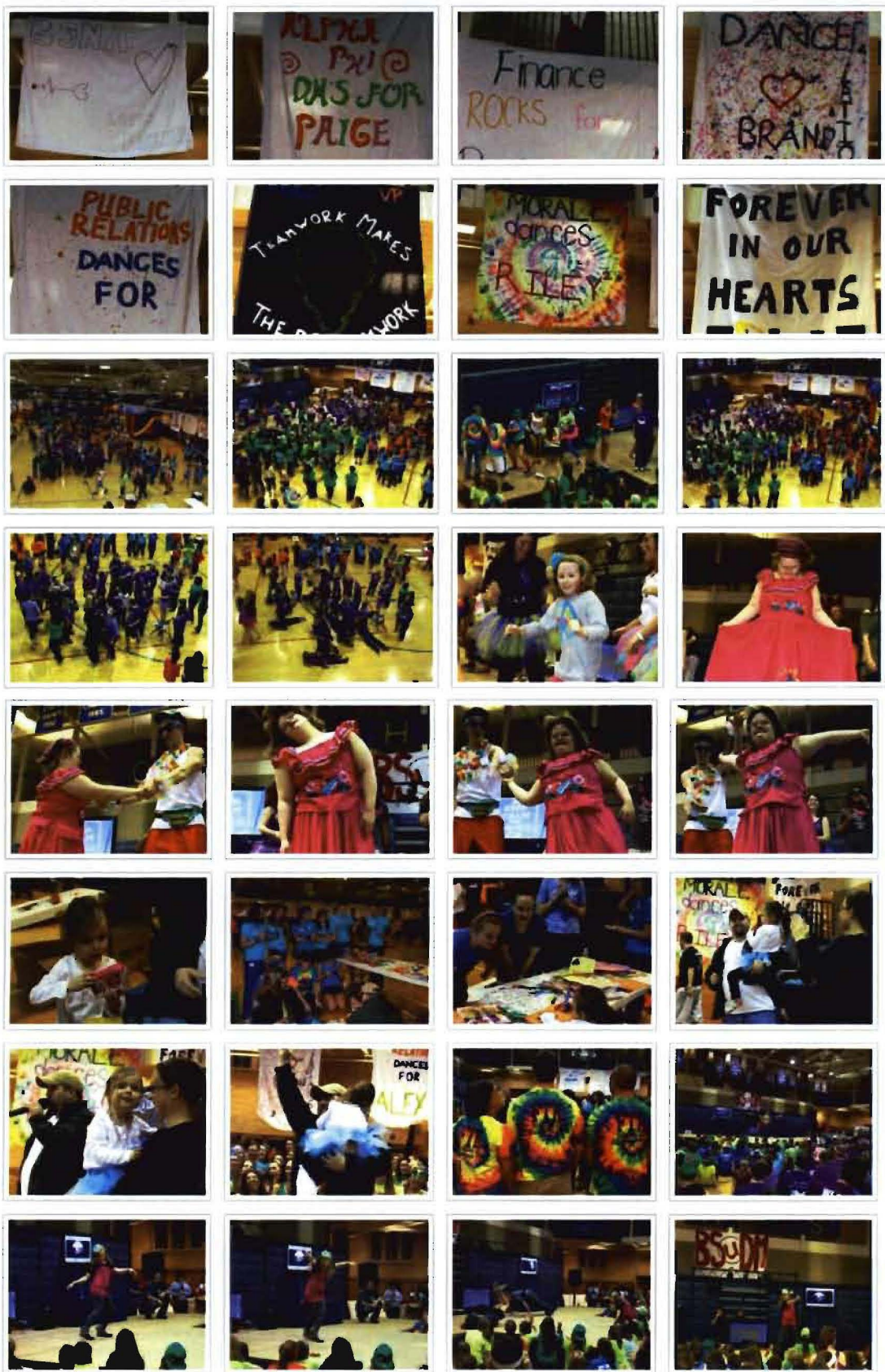




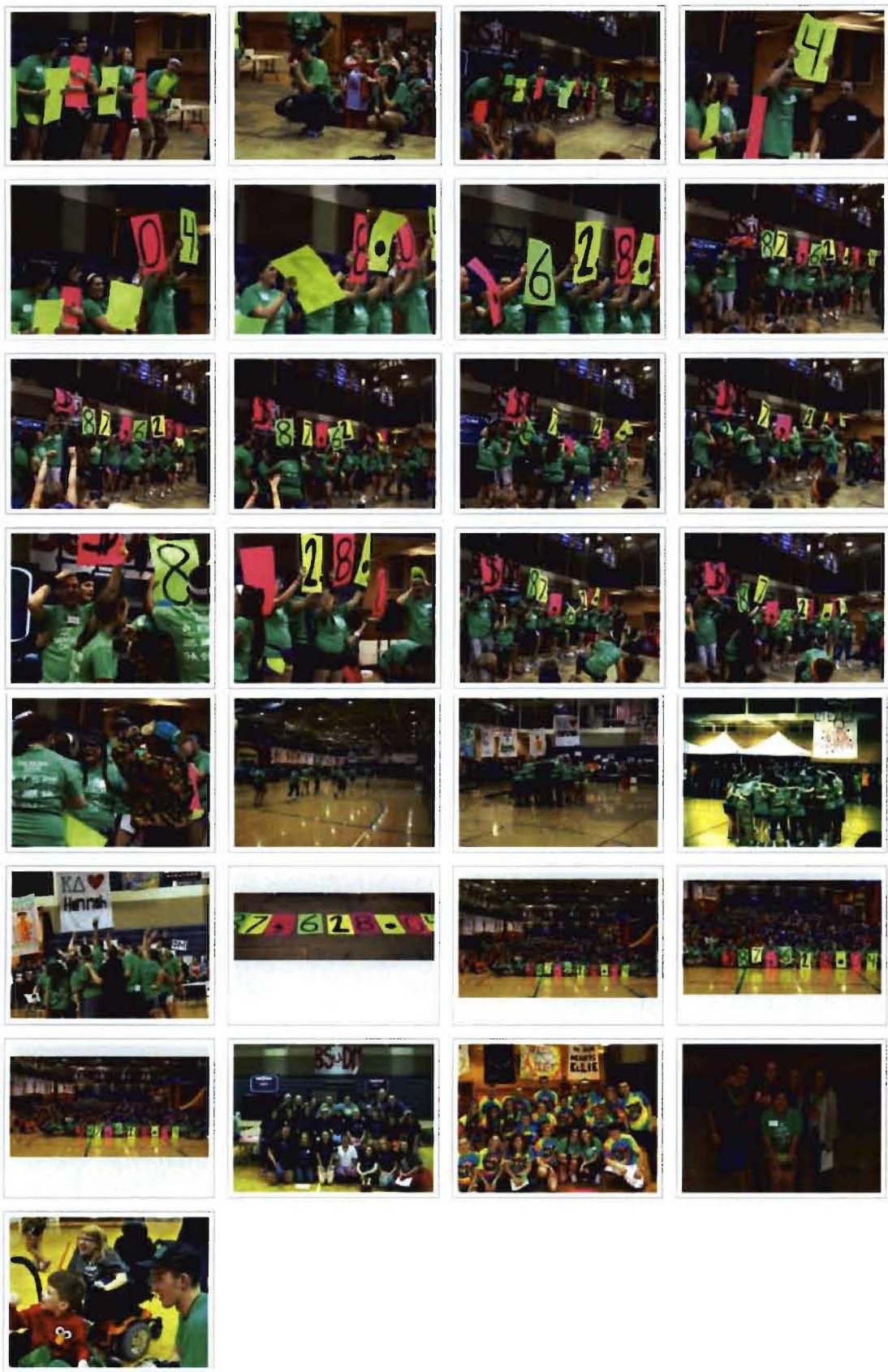












After creating all of the different parts of the Facebook page, the next step was continuing to generate content that would maintain the interest of the followers and to increase the number of “Likes” on the page. Throughout the course of my year as the director of public relations, the number of “Likes” on the page went from zero to 370.

For the content of the page, I focused on keeping the followers engaged with the information I was posting. The most common things that I posted to the page were links to YouTube videos with stories about Riley kids and links to our FirstGiving dancer registration page. I normally posted from the BSUDM account at least once every other day to keep the audience engaged, but not overwhelm them with information.

To determine what content I posted on the Facebook page, I thought about the key messages I needed to convey to the Ball State community. I believe that more students are willing to watch videos about Riley kids than they would be to read an article. I kept these thoughts in mind throughout the year as I created content for the page. I tried to keep the content as interactive as possible, posting multi-media stories and other engaging material.

My other main use for Facebook was the creation of “Events” for the various special events and dancer call outs that were held throughout the year. Once an event was created, I asked all of the executive board and committee members to invite all of their friends to the events to ensure that the Ball State community was aware of what was going on. I created all of the content for each event as well as using InDesign software to create a graphic as the display picture.

Past Events

The Ball State University Dance Marathon Page does not have any upcoming events. These are the events that it has hosted in the past.



BSUDM 2012-2013 Exec Call Out
Thursday, March 15, 2012 at 9:30pm
Megan Gross and 72 other guests

AJ 175



BSUDM 3 vs. 3 Basketball Tournament
Saturday, February 4, 2012 at 1:00pm
Kristin Cochran and 946 other guests

Ball Gym



Dancer Call Out!
Tuesday, January 31, 2012 at 9:30pm
Kristin Cochran and 941 other guests

AJ 175



BSUDM Date Auction
Thursday, November 17, 2011 at 7:00pm
Kristin Cochran and 1,290 other guests

AR (Art Musuem) 217



Dancer Call Out Meeting
Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at 9:30pm
Kristin Cochran and 2,128 other guests

Schwartz Media Room (first floor of Bracken)



BSUDM Golf Outing
Sunday, October 9, 2011 at 12:30pm
Megan Gross and 624 other guests

Muncie Elks Club



2012 BSUDM Dancer Call Out
Wednesday, September 28, 2011 at 7:00pm
Kristin Cochran and 820 other guests

Pineshelf Room in the Student Center



BSUDM Committee Callout
Tuesday, August 30, 2011 at 8:00pm
Amber Doyle and 721 other guests

TC 101

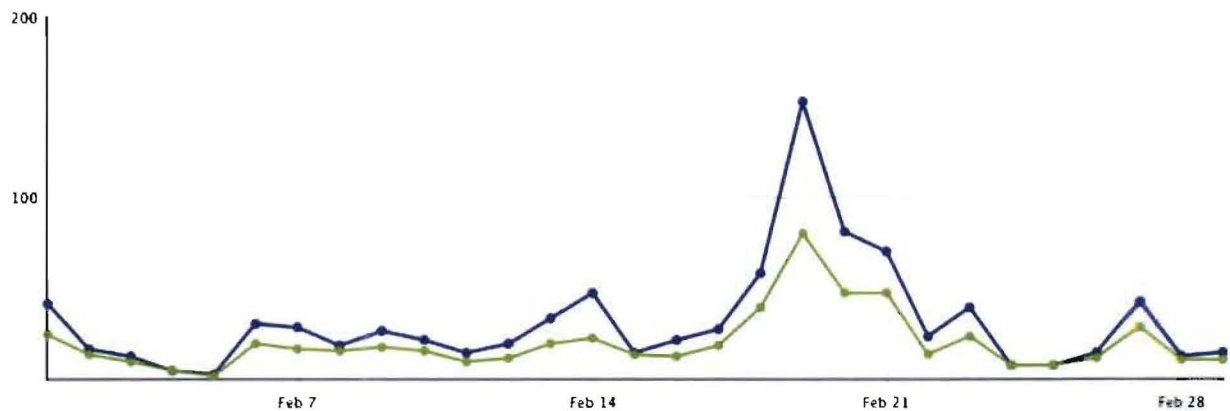
As an administer of the page, I had access to “Insights,” provided by Facebook, that kept track of the number of new “Likes” per week as well as the number of people mentioning the Ball State University Dance Marathon on their personal page and the total reach of such comments. This information was extremely helpful when I was trying to analyze the use of the Facebook page. The information that I chose to focus on below is from the February 15 to 21, which represents the time just before and just after the marathon. I chose to analyze this time period specifically because I believed it would be the time at which the Facebook page would receive the most traffic.

The total reach of the page increased throughout the year, as it got closer to the week of the marathon. The height of the BSUDM page’s reach was the February 15 to 21. That week, the page reached a total of 10,032 people. Females represented 62 percent of the reach while males represented 37 percent. The age demographic with the highest reach was the 18 to 24 age group with 77 percent of the total reach.

Visits to Your Page

Page Views

☒ Page Views? ☒ Unique Visitors?



Total Tab Views?

871 Wall
13 Photos
4 Information
3 Tweets To Pages
1 Events
1 Friend Activity

External Referrers?

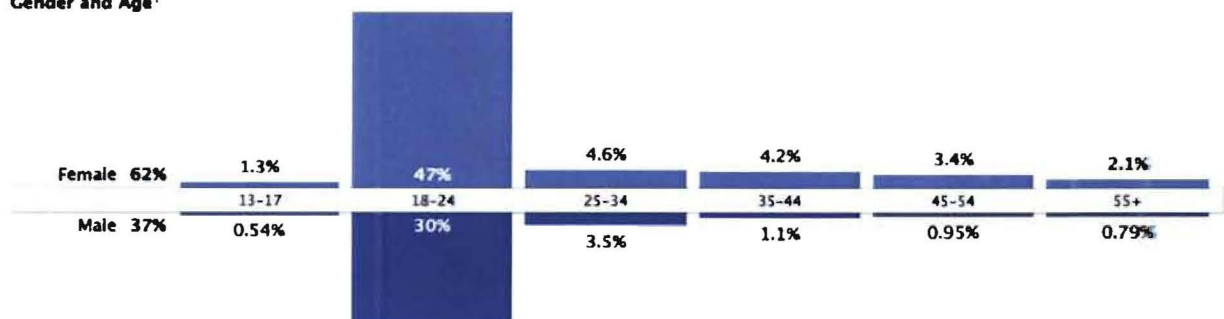
13 google.com
2 bsudancemarathon.org
1 static.wix.com

02/01/2012 - 02/29/2012

[Export Data](#)

Who You Reached (Demographics and Location)

Gender and Age?



Countries?

2,385 United States of America
5 United Kingdom
2 South Korea
2 Australia
2 Germany
2 Ireland
2 Poland
[More](#)

Cities?

948 Muncie, IN
276 Indianapolis, IN
116 Bloomington, IN
62 West Lafayette, IN
54 Fort Wayne, IN
53 Valparaiso, IN
40 Chicago, IL
[More](#)

Languages?

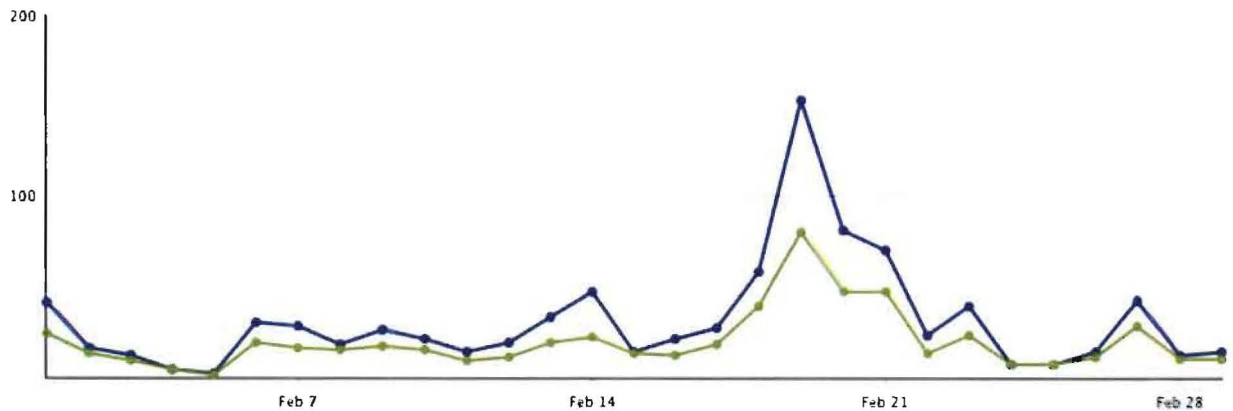
2,332 English (US)
63 English (UK)
4 English (Pirate)
3 Spanish
2 Spanish (Spain)
2 French (France)
2 German
[More](#)

All of the activity generated on the Facebook page was viral and none of it was paid for through advertisement.

Visits to Your Page

Page Views

☒ Page Views? ☒ Unique Visitors?



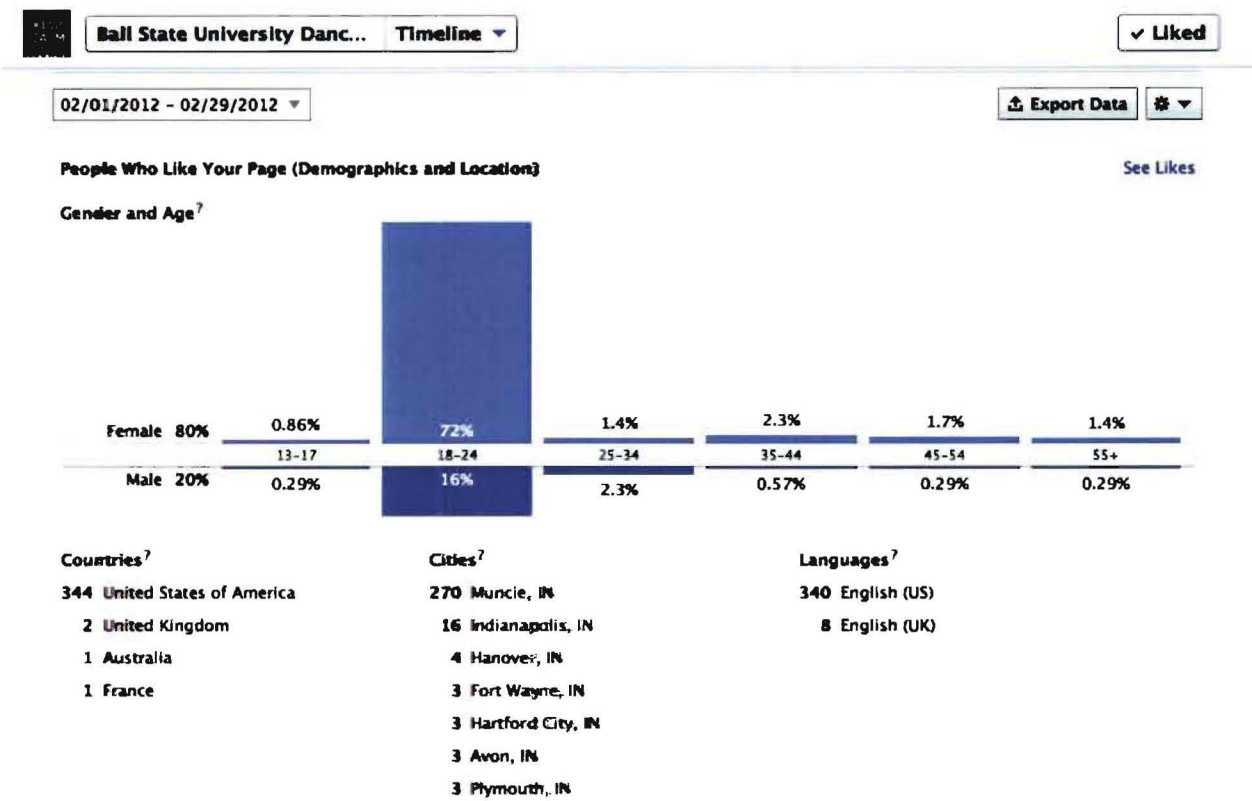
Total Tab Views?

871 Wall
13 Photos
4 Information
3 Tweets To Pages
1 Events
1 Friend Activity

External Referrers?

13 google.com
2 bsudancemarathon.org
1 static.wix.com

In the month of February 80 percent of the people who “Liked” the page were female and 20 percent were male. Eighty-eight percent of the people who “Liked” the page were between the ages of 18 to 24.



There were more than 180 visitors to the Facebook page on February 19, the day after the marathon. Of those 180 visitors, there were 93 unique, or new, visitors throughout the day.

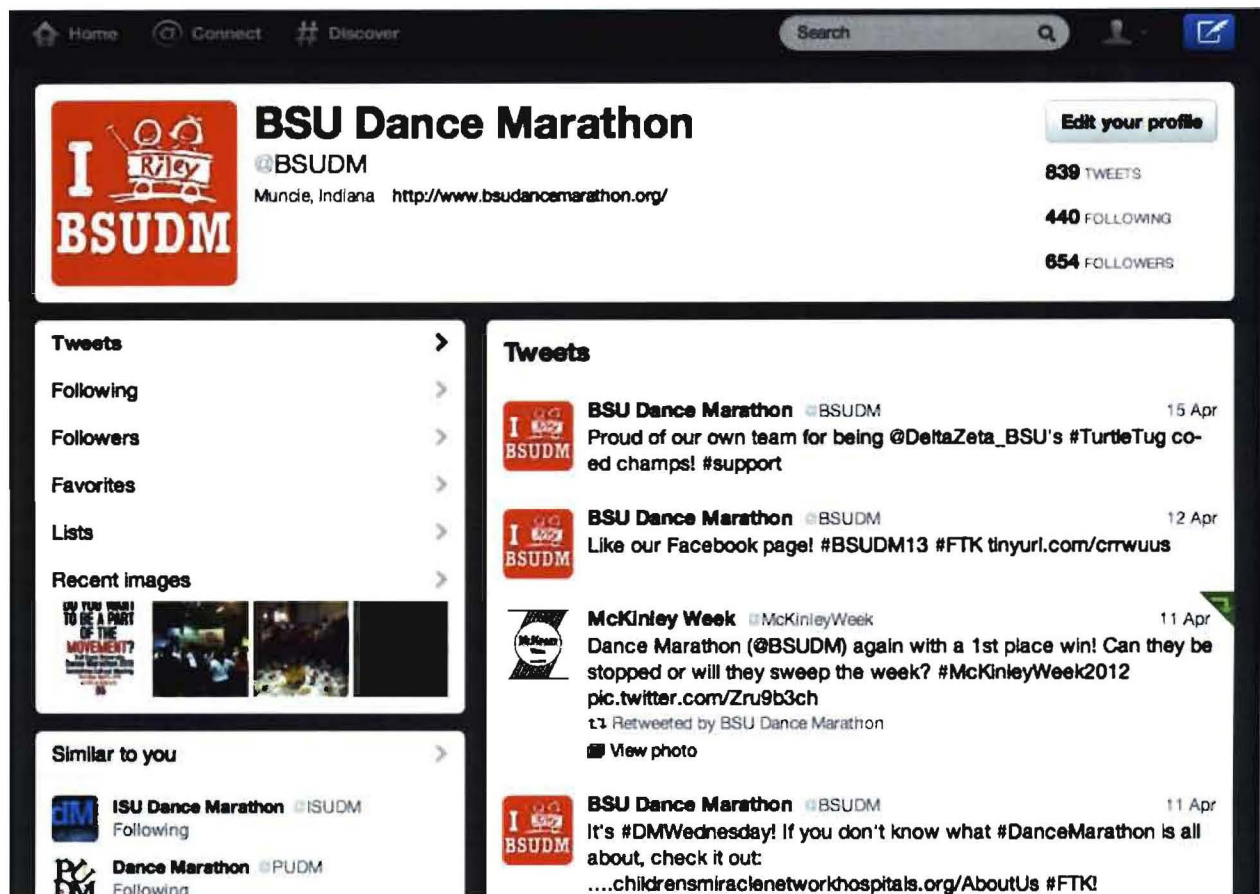
Although the information above represents a specific week of site analysis for the Facebook page, I believe it is an important week to highlight. The Facebook page was created at the beginning of my term as director of public relations and saw immense growth throughout my year in the role. I chose to highlight the week of the marathon specifically

because I believed it would be the time when there was the most traffic for the site.

Through my analysis of the insight information, I found my assumption to be true.

I think one of the best outcomes of the marathon was the increased activity on the Facebook page. A lot of the people who “Liked” the page when it was originally created were executive board members (both past and present) as well as committee members. With increased awareness of Dance Marathon through the event, the Facebook page was able to attract more of the Ball State student population. This increase will also be beneficial to my successor because it gives them a larger starting fan base than I began with when I created the page.

Twitter



Ball State University Dance Marathon's Twitter handle is @BSUDM. The Twitter account was created before I began working as the director of public relations, but was not really utilized as a communication outlet by my predecessor. The Twitter account had a solid base of followers, but my goal was to increase the usage of the account and to increase the total number of followers.

My strategy with the Twitter account was to create interactive content that followers would find relevant and to keep followers informed about everything happening through Dance Marathon.

With the Twitter account, I thought it was important to generate content more frequently than with the Facebook account. I believe this because Twitter is a faster, shorter means of communicating with an audience. Twitter updates are limited to 140 characters, so it is important to be very concise with content. Because I wanted to create content on a more consistent and constant basis, I used HootSuite as a management tool for the Twitter account.

I chose to use HootSuite because it is a service that allows you to manage multiple accounts at a time and users also have the ability to create content and schedule it to be sent in the future. I found the scheduling tool to be extremely helpful when planning content for @BSUDM. I was able to sit down at the beginning of each week and schedule all of the tweets for the entire week based on my schedule of events. This was helpful because it ensured that tweets were being sent out throughout the day, but it did not require me to have access to the Internet or a smart phone.

Throughout my year as the director of public relations, I tried to schedule at least one tweet per day to keep the followers of the account engaged. When there were events, I would try to tweet more often to get the attention of our followers. As the marathon approached, I launched the use of our Twitter account into overdrive. For the two weeks prior to the marathon, I tweeted an average of six times per day. The content of those tweets mainly focused on encouraging dancers to continue their fundraising efforts for the marathon. Similar to the Facebook page, I tried to create content that was as interactive as possible, tweeting links to YouTube videos and other multimedia sources.

The 2012 executive board held our meetings every Wednesday, so we decided that we would wear BSUDM clothing items to increase awareness on campus. To encourage interaction with the followers of the account, I created the hashtag #DMWednesday. I asked my fellow executive board members to use this hashtag to help generate awareness about Dance Marathon. In addition to using the hashtag on Wednesdays, I also asked followers of the @BSUDM account to answer questions. These questions were designed to create another level of interactivity with followers. One example of a question is, "What is your favorite thing about #BSUDM?" #DMWednesday was created to increase social media interaction between the followers and the @BSUDM account.

The @BSUDM account was also used to create interaction between the Ball State Dance Marathon and marathons on a national level. I kept track of the dates of other marathons taking place around the country and I would tweet at them to wish them luck at their marathons and to congratulate them for their totals. I worked especially hard to create relationships between BSUDM and other marathons in Indiana working to raise money for Riley. I kept followers updated when our executive board visited other Indiana marathons at places like Indiana University, Purdue, and Butler, as well as the results of our mini-marathons. I did this to try and create a sense of community among all of the Indiana schools working to raise money for the same hospital.

At the end of my term, the @BSUDM Twitter account had more than 650 followers and more than 830 tweets. Both the number of followers and tweets increased greatly throughout my term as director of public relations. I believe that the interactive content I generated played a major part in increasing the number of followers for the account. This

increase will also be beneficial for my successor because they will have a solid foundation to build off of during the coming year.

Events

Along with the promotion of the marathon itself, it was also my job to promote all of the special events put on by Dance Marathon prior to the actual event. For Ball State's homecoming, I generated social media about our executive board member who represented BSUDM on the homecoming royalty court and I coordinated promotional material to be passed out during the parade. During the parade, I created a flyer with information on how to register as a dancer for the marathon with a quick response (QR) code. I also made posters for other executive board members to carry while they walked in the parade.

The other major events held throughout the year were a golf outing, a date auction, and a three-on-three basketball tournament. For each of these events, I created social media messages to make the followers of the Facebook and Twitter pages aware of what was happening. I created a Facebook "Event" for each event with a description of what was going on, where it was taking place, and who the money was benefitting. I created a unique graphic for each special event that served as the display picture. Along with Facebook coverage, I also tweeted about the events taking place and linked the URL of the Facebook event. This allowed followers of the Twitter account to view the Facebook page and get more detailed information about the event taking place. Executive board and committee members were all asked to invite all of their Ball State friends to the events in an attempt to create awareness.

Guerilla Marketing

In conjunction with the traditional promotional methods, I also undertook a few guerilla marketing projects during the year. The first guerilla marketing technique that I used involved the QR codes for Dance Marathon. With the help of my public relations committee members, I created small squares with the QR codes that we passed out all over campus. Our hope was that through this effort, we could get students to use the QR and be led to the Dance Marathon website where they would register for the marathon.

The second guerilla marketing tactic I used was the hanging up of flyers all over campus. I created a flyer in InDesign promoting Dance Marathon and printed out more than 200 copies to hang up all over campus. I took some of the flyers to the Housing and Residence office so they could be put up in the dorms. The remaining flyers were hung up in building all around campus and were put up on the kiosk located outside of Noyer.

The final and most in-depth guerilla marketing event took place at the end of January as a final push to get dancers registered for the marathon. With the help of the Riley Relations committee, I created yard signs that were put up on McKinley for a day. The signs were double-sided and were put up on both sides of the street. Each set of signs gave facts about two particular Riley kids and told their stories. I chose to use signs with facts on them to help make the kids' stories more relatable and inspiring to Ball State students. These signs were put up the day of our last dancer call out meeting. I received positive feedback on Twitter, where followers tweeted at our account about the signs they saw on campus.

I think that the guerrilla marketing techniques I used on campus this year created a solid foundation for similar activities in the future. I definitely think there is potential for more guerilla marketing in the future, especially building off of the statistical sign idea. I think the signs were a good way to raise awareness for Dance Marathon and could be carried out on a larger scale next year with the proper planning.

Media Relations

Another important role for any public relations position is media relations. Throughout the year, I worked with the Daily News to generate news coverage for Dance Marathon and all of the special events we held. The Daily News covered our date auction as a feature story and they wrote both pre and post Dance Marathon stories, which each made the front page of the news. The post-marathon story was the headlining story the Monday after the event and was covered above the fold and continued on the back page. Overall, I was pleased with the quality of the coverage Dance Marathon received throughout the year. The coverage was fairly frequent and the stories were portrayed in a positive light.

Along with working with the Daily News writers, I also worked with an account executive in the Daily News Ads office. At the beginning of my term as the director of public relations, I met with one of the directors of DN Ads and I was able to work out a contract with them. I secured free advertisement space that I was able to use throughout the year to promote our special events and the marathon itself.

In addition to my work with the Daily News, I also tried to expand our media coverage beyond the Ball State community. I contacted a director at WLBC radio station,

which reaches audiences from Indianapolis to Muncie. The Tuesday before the marathon, I called into their morning show and I was given a five minute on-air interview.

I had hoped to expand the coverage of the marathon beyond the Muncie area, but media relations is the one area that I feel like I really neglected. It was an area that I considered to be more “optional” if there were more pressing matters at hand. In a last minute effort to secure more press coverage, I attempted to contact television stations in the Indianapolis area, but I did not get any response. If I could go back in, I would have tried to devote more of my time to media coverage for the marathon.

Marathon

Most of my work as the director of public relations took place before the marathon since it was my job to create awareness of the event. During the actual marathon, I had a few jobs. I was in charge of live tweeting the event, coordinating videographers and photographers, and creating signage for the event location.

The purpose of creating signage for the venue was to help inform the dancers of where things were in the building. I created signs for things like the dancer room, the family room, the committee room, and for dancer registration. These signs were useful to dancers throughout the night and provided them with direction.

My most difficult job for the night was coordinating the videographers and photographers for the event. This was a challenge because I originally had a videographer set to film the event, but he decided to back out of the project on the Monday before the marathon. I scrambled to get other videographers and luckily, I was able to find two replacements before the marathon. It was also a challenge to coordinate photographers

for the event. I think if I had to repeat the process again, I would make sure that I had at least two people to cover the event. I would do this to ensure that even if one person backed out last minute, I would have a replacement readily available.

My final job during the marathon was live tweeting the event. In preparation for the marathon, I created the hashtag #BSUDM12 and created a sign for the hashtag that was hung up in the gym. Throughout the marathon, I tweeted about the events that were taking place, the families that told their stories, and updates about the amount of time remaining. I think the live tweeting was a success, especially with the use of the hashtag. Dancers also used the hashtag throughout the night, which helped me to document their reactions to different parts of the marathon. It was also fun to read the dancers' tweets the next day to see how they had been affected by the marathon and the Riley kids' stories.

Results and Evaluation Methods

The 2012 marathon had the best results to date. More than 750 dancers registered for the event and more than 700 dancers attended the marathon. The 2011 Dance Marathon only had a total of 398 dancers. The total amount of money raised for Riley Hospital for Children was \$87,628.04, a **123.4** percent increase from the 2011 total of \$39,220. The total amount of money raised for the marathon was through dancer fundraising, corporate sponsorships, and through special events held throughout the year. As the director of public relations, it was my job to generate publicity for the marathon. Because of the totals we saw for both the number of dancers and the total amount of money raised, I believe that my communication plan was a success.

Recommendations

Although I believe that this year's communication plan was a success, I have a few future recommendations that I believe will help the marathon grow further. I do not think I really had enough time to concentrate on media relations throughout my term. Originally, the role as the director of public relations was supposed to be a two-person job, but my co-director decided to graduate in December and was asked to step down from her position. I think I was able to undertake the duties my job required, but if there had been another person to help with my position, I would have been able to focus less on the day-to-day activities and more on expanding the role of public relations for Dance Marathon.

One of the things I would have like to have done would have been to create stronger ties with media organizations around the state of Indiana. I would have liked to have more coverage from the Star Press in Muncie, as well as television coverage by Indianapolis outlets. I think this could have been possible if I had had more time to work on media relations, but I was focused on issues closer at hand.

Another thing I would have liked to look into was the idea of live streaming the marathon on the Internet. Most of the other big schools have live streaming, so I think looking in to doing so would be beneficial for the growth of Ball State's Dance Marathon. I think this would also help to keep alumni engaged as the alumni base continues to grow.

I mentioned all of these ideas to my successors in hopes they will choose to work on these projects during their terms. Before their transition I also spent time researching the roles of public relations directors at other universities' dance marathons to try and give them some ideas about what their roles could look like in the future. I think it is important

to look at other organizations and their successes so Ball State Dance Marathon is able to build on their own success. I believe that the marathon will continue to grow this coming year and I hope my successors learn from both my successes and my failures.